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America's Press Conference of the Air

Guest: GEORGE BUSH
Director, Central Intelligence Agency

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Panel: FORD ROWAN, *NBC News*
ANTHONY LEWIS, *The New York Times*
CROSBY NOYES, *The Washington Star*
WALTER PINCUS, *The Washington Post*

Moderator: BILL MONROE

Executive Producer: BILL MONROE

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M E E T T H E P R E S S

MR. MONROE: This is Bill Monroe, inviting you to MEET THE PRESS with George Bush, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Mr. Bush has been in his new job at the CIA for three weeks. He was formerly U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Ambassador to China, and before that, Chairman of the Republican National Committee. He is a former Texas Congressman and unsuccessful candidate for the Senate from that state.

We will have the first questions now from Ford Rowan of NBC News.

MR. ROWAN: Mr. Bush, the President's new program for the intelligence agency seeks to prevent leaks and protect secrets by making it a crime for government employees to leak information about intelligence sources and methods.

While legislation would not impose criminal penalties on the news media, a reporter who received leaked information would be an eyewitness to a crime and could be forced to reveal his sources before a grand jury or go to jail.

At issue of course is whether this new procedure could result in future coverups of abuses and crimes by the CIA. Would you be willing to endorse legislation which has been endorsed by your predecessor, William Colby, which would permit reporters to claim a privilege and not reveal their sources to government investigators?

MR. BUSH: I don't think there is anything in the new legislation that would change the liability or the potential liability of a newsman, and I am not a lawyer. I wish I were, in this job. My predecessor was a very able lawyer. And so I would have to consult our own attorneys about that. But I think the point I would like to make, Mr. Rowan, is that there is no additional exposure for news people because of this proposed legislation or because of the regulations that I am instructed to promulgate under the order.

MR. ROWAN: Mr. Bush, the Attorney General has said that he would be willing to call reporters before grand juries and question them about their sources, and the change, of course, is that now they would be asked about a crime that they were an eyewitness to. Do you think this could lead to future coverups, like, for example, the story that appeared 14 months ago in the New York Times that led to the investigation of domestic spying —would anyone in the government have been willing to leak that information if they thought that a grand jury could find out their identity?

MR. BUSH: There is no change in—I think you are referring to the Hersh story—under this. The thing that is involved is sources and methods, and that will continue to be involved, but that is not what was happening under the Hersh story, so I see no chance in that happening under the legislation that is proposed by the President. But you see, we want to—I think we want to be darned sure the sins of the past are eliminated, but equally sure that this intelligence system can operate with secrecy in the future. That is our objective, fairness; and I think we can do it.

MR. ROWAN: Certainly “Operation Chaos” which involves spying on American citizens was a method, and certainly NSA surveillance of electronic communications of American citizens is a method, and certainly Americans are worried that their government is spying on them.

MR. BUSH: I think the main thing to remember, Mr. Rowan, as you study that order, is that those things are eliminated under this new proposal. Those things are specifically, by reference, eliminated.

(Announcements)

MR. LEWIS: Mr. Bush, before we go on about intelligence, I am just tempted to ask you a question on a different subject, from your experience as head of our liaison mission in Peking. Why did the Chinese invite former President Nixon to go there?

MR. BUSH: You know, I was thinking of that coming over in the car. They do have a thing there they call “Friends of China,” and it is people from all walks of life. There is no formality to it. It is an expression used. In my 14 months in China we heard over and over again that President Nixon was a “friend of China.” There also was a certain nostalgia connected with the timing of the visit, because it was four years ago to this day, or yesterday, I guess, that he went there. And then I would say there is an additional point: The Chinese recognize in former President Nixon somebody who presented to them our national self interest, but also they saw in him somebody that was very understanding of the threat in the world, which they conceive largely to be the Soviets. That is not to say that they don’t think others feel that way, but I think it is a combination of affection for him because of shifting the policy, and to them that he symbolizes a certain ability to cope with the Soviets. And you know the President’s visit was successful, and I think that this visit, on a very different, private basis is good. I think they believe in our relationship. They want a good relationship with the United States.

MR. LEWIS: You say that you think the visit is good, and you spoke of symbols, but of course—

MR. BUSH: (Inaudible.)

MR. LEWIS: —some in this country may well see a different symbol. He was a President who was disgraced, left office, received a pardon for any and all crimes he may have committed, and accepted the pardon. I mean, do they understand what that means in this country?

MR. BUSH: I don't think that concerns them, because they say—now I am not saying whether it should or not; please don't put me down as—I am just trying to answer a question based on my experience in China. They say Watergate makes no difference. They actually quote—that could be a direct quote, it is awful close to it. So you see, they are not dwelling on Watergate.

We can argue, and there is plenty of room for opinion—and I have my own personal opinion, which I don't plan to divulge to you, about how I feel about it—but I am telling you how the Chinese feel about it.

MR. LEWIS: I had better come back to a subject on which you may have some personal feelings which you may divulge. In following up Mr. Rowan, you said those things such as the domestic spying had been specifically eliminated in this program. But there are two things about that in the President's program, as I understand it. First of all, there are a lot of exceptions. Certain surveillance is allowed. Corporations may be watched for this purpose or that. Organizations may be infiltrated. All domestically. The larger question is really what Mr. Rowan was trying to get at, I think. How can you expect people to disclose that kind of wrong, if it does go wrong, if you frighten them not only with this criminal statute but with this oath that you are asking of them, never to tell a secret, a classified intelligence matter?

MR. BUSH: It is a very good question. I would say that most of the recommendations of the Rockefeller Commission have been addressed by this. I could read the list, but it is too long. Physical surveillance, unconsented search and all these things are addressed. True, there are some exceptions. But I think the main answer to your question, Mr. Lewis, lies in the fact that there is oversight machinery within the Executive Branch. There will be more oversight machinery within the Legislative Branch. There is a better and more, I think, responsive system where people of a—inspector generals, and of general counsel activities in different agencies in the intelligence community, to safeguard the people of this country against the kind of abuses that offended you and that offended me, without ruining our ability to keep secrets and without weakening our ability to keep a strong intelligence capability. We have got to do that, and some intelligence must be secret.

MR. NOYES: Mr. Bush, considering the problems that some of your predecessors have had as head of the CIA, what moved you to take on the job?

MR. BUSH: I said this at the Senate hearings. Perhaps the times are a little cynical, and people may not understand this: I felt a sense of duty, a sense of obligation. I was asked to do it without great background or chance to debate it. I was in China at the time, and I feel if you are called on to serve you ought to serve. It is a tough job.

I have been very pleased at the quality of the people I have found out there already at Langley headquarters of the CIA and, indeed, in the whole intelligence community. I recognize it is controversial, but I think it is fundamentally important. I think I can do it with integrity. I had inculcated into me early, as many people have, a sense of service, and it is no more complicated than that.

MR. NOYES: Do you think you'll be successful in rehabilitating the CIA in the eyes of Congress and the American people?

MR. BUSH: I hope so, sir. I am going to try, and I have excellent help there.

MR. NOYES: How long do you plan to be there?

MR. BUSH: I will be there as long as they want me. I am serving at the pleasure of the President, this President, the future President, and I am approaching this as a real commitment with no time frame. When I've discussed this job with the President, there has been no thing [that] I will stay for a certain period of time.

MR. NOYES: Do you feel there have been any serious lapses of direction in the previous management of the CIA?

MR. BUSH: Yes, sir, I think there are some things that are desperately needed to be changed. As soon as the Rockefeller Commission Report came out, the former Director very promptly put out regulations addressing himself to specifics. Many of the things he had done before that. Yes, there were clearly abuses. There were awful abuses, but the problem is, though, that we have heard, because of the nature of the abuses, we have heard of the abuses, we have heard of some abuses that didn't prove to be abuses, and we have not, because of the nature of the business, heard of the successes. So we do have a major problem, and yet I have the comforting feeling that the American people support the concept of a strong CIA and a strong intelligence community.

MR. NOYES: Did the responsibility for the abuses reside primarily in the White House or in the direction of the CIA itself?

MR. BUSH: I think there is plenty of blame to go around in lots of different areas.

MR. PINCUS: I would like to come at the question of leaks from a different point of view.
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Last fall there were disclosures made to congressional committees about a covert operation by the United States in Angola, and your predecessor, Mr. Colby, and the administration have been very critical that that information was leaked out gradually to the press.

A good deal of that leaking came about because at the very same time that Congress was told we were acting in Angola covertly, administration officials were saying publicly that no such activity was taking place.

As you look to the problem of leaking, do you see a necessity of the administration to tell the truth in those areas as a way of preventing leaks which come about because there have been misleading statements made to the public?

MR. BUSH: I think there is a necessity of telling the truth. It is very difficult in something involving covert operations. If they were fully disclosed, they would no longer be covert, so it is very difficult, I think, to have full disclosure.

But certainly the concept of lying to the American people is not a valid one, and so I would hope that this problem will be ameliorated now by the more formalized procedure of the new oversight group; by the special operations committee, the former 40 Committee; I think, close cooperation and contact with Congress—which is one of the things that is going to come out of this, and I am fully supportive of that, out of all these investigations—will result in an elimination or minimization of the chance for that kind of thing, but I really believe that we ought to avoid the posture of lying publicly. But there will be many times when we cannot be responsive to questions because of the nature of the work that we are involved in.

MR. PINCUS: But you recognize there is a difference between being responsive and misleading?

MR. BUSH: Yes, sir, I do recognize that, and I hope I can conduct myself in this job with that in mind.

MR. PINCUS: Following on, on Angola there was additional criticism that the release of the information about Angola led to Congress cutting off aid to Angola, and that, therefore, this was damaging to our national security.

The administration now seems to be moving to a position of recognizing the very faction in Angola that we were at one time trying to undermine covertly. Do you think as a result of those leaks and the congressional action that our national security has been undermined because of Angola?

MR. BUSH: I don't know enough about all the details of Angola to say that, but I would come down strongly against the leaks. I think the machinery—let's look to the future instead of the past. I think the machinery is there to safeguard the interests of the American people through information to Con-

gress, and I do feel that leaking covert operations is very damaging to the United States. But, whether you could prove in a court of law that any specific case damaged the national security, I don't know. It is clear to me in looking at Angola that Cuba and the Soviet Union at this point have come out ahead. That is clear. What evolves in Angola from now or whether we can move in there diplomatically or something and improve the situation, that is for the future to determine.

MR. MONROE: Mr. Bush, in Angola the administration was engaged in a secret operation which, it turned out, the Congress opposed and, judging by polls, the people of the country were strongly opposed to. Wouldn't the U. S. have suffered less psychological damage there if the administration had been required to go to Congress and seek approval for that covert operation and been told by Congress, "No, don't do it?"

MR. BUSH: I am not sure it would have happened exactly that way. You see, the problem in Angola is not so much Angola itself, but it is the perception of national will in other areas, important areas and with other countries, allies, friends and foe alike.

In Angola you can't separate it from the broad perception of our will. But in your specific question, I don't know that that would have made a difference or not. I think under the new machinery that we can avoid—even though we are not giving prior notice of covert operations, I think through goodwill and communication with the oversight committees, protecting secrecy so it won't leak out if an operation starts, we can safeguard the interests of the American people, and I think a lousy operation could be aborted by congressional action, either through resource control or through their taking it up with the President, which Congress has a wonderful way of doing, and they have a right to do that.

MR. ROWAN: Mr. Bush, there has been a lot of controversy about the publication of the secret report of the House Intelligence Committee, which the House of Representatives voted to keep secret.

I would like to ask you, is there anything, any damage that has resulted from the publication of that report? Can you tell us any specific instance of damage to national security by the people knowing what was in that report?

MR. BUSH: There are certain things in there, but if I told you those specifics, that would highlight those and make things worse. But, yes, there are certain things in there that the intelligence community feels is damaging to the national security. But the fundamental question is, the Congress overwhelmingly voted by almost two to one that that report not be made public, and the report was made public without fulfilling the

In my lexicon that is just plain wrong. But that is a matter now for the Congress to determine, not the intelligence community.

MR. ROWAN: I'd like to return to the idea of what kind of damage was done. Certainly the Russians are smart enough to know what is in the report that they would like to find out. The question is of national security. Are you defining national security to be the reputation and prestige of the CIA?

MR. BUSH: Well, listen, come to think of it, I could make a case for that being important to national security, but I think there are many more specifics which, if I dwelt on them, would simply show the concern we feel about them. We will pass them along to the proper authorities, but I am not going to do it here, or I would be practicing the very thing I am condemning in others.

MR. LEWIS: Mr. Bush, you spoke of the issue in Angola as being one of demonstrating the national will. It strikes me as an odd concept that we should demonstrate it in secret.

Really, the problem that Angola poses, it seems to me, is whether we should undertake a major foreign policy initiative going into a whole new area of the world in secret. Don't we usually, haven't we, since 200 years ago, demonstrated our national will by doing things in the open—that big a thing?

MR. BUSH: I can't totally argue with your point. I think it is a very, very valid observation, and I can't say, in retrospect, that what you are suggesting about open debate on it would be wrong. What I am saying though is that when we undertake something and we represent to others we are undertaking it, they are going to be watching to see if we have the follow-through, if we have the will.

But I think in many instances, frankly I think you will find less use of covert activity. I think there is an awareness now that it is much better to approve things in public. But I will say this, that somewhere in between sending a battalion of Marines into some place and doing nothing, you need to retain a covert capability. To the degree my judgment counts on covert, we are going to be very, very careful in the future. But to the degree some say: Should we have covert at all, or not; I say, yes, this country must retain a flexible and a strong covert capability.

MR. LEWIS: Mr. Bush, a few moments ago you said that we have to rely for controlling abuses not only on law in effect, but on better oversight by the Executive itself, or Congress. The President has proposed something called an oversight board of three distinguished gentlemen. Without being unkind, I want to say they are rather elderly, that they are part time, and I just wonder whether you seriously think that such civilians can

keep abreast of all the things that may go wrong or that you have just told us a little earlier did go wrong?

MR. BUSH: Let me go back and say I hope I didn't come down saying I don't think you need any law. I hope that this executive order, and then the requests for legislation that have gone forward from the President, say, in the field of assassination, I hope that will be passed.

Yes, we need law, but certainly you need, inside the executive branch, some machinery. I can't accept in this day of discrimination, age discrimination, because a fellow like Mr. Murphy is a very able person, and I don't think you intended that, but I would say that this machinery, where the inspectors general and the general counsel and individuals are encouraged, without going to the Director, say, someone in the CIA, inspector general, to go direct to the oversight board, is a good kind of machinery to have available. You couple that with more oversight by the Congress, and we are moving toward responsibility on the part of people like ourselves, the CIA.

MR. LEWIS: Mr. Bush, on law, you mentioned the one example where the President has proposed a law to limit covert actions. That is on assassinations. I wonder whether you would favor any other limit. For example, on September 15, 1970, President Nixon instructed one of your predecessors to encourage a military coup against the democratic system of another country, Chile.

If someone said that to you now, ordered you to do that, would you do it? How do you feel about that?

MR. BUSH: I wouldn't do it. I will tell you why I wouldn't say it. It is because under the President's own order, this double tracking, that that became referred to, is eliminated by much more formalized actions of the old 40 Committee, the Special Operations Committee. Nobody can say "Oh, I wasn't there; I got a phone call."

Everybody sits around and makes a decision of this nature. And the assassination thing has been ruled out by law.

Also, Mr. Lewis, you come back in the final analysis to judgment, to integrity. You can't really define in a code of law everything that is going to guarantee perfection. I respect the attempt that has been made to try to eliminate abuse, and yet if you say, "Are you guaranteeing there will be no abuse?", I couldn't say it in this field or any other field, by law.

MR. MONROE: We have just about two minutes.

MR. NOYES: Mr. Bush, what do you think the chances are that Congress will enact some kind of legislation that subjects itself to criminal sanctions in the case of divulging official secrets?

MR. BUSH: I think there are two chances: Slim and none.

MR. NOYES: In that case, how effective do you think these secrets—

MR. BUSH: I am not sure they should, incidentally. I am not sure they should under this speech and debate clause, but those are the two chances I see.

MR. NOYES: In the case that we are up against now, the sanctions will be limited to very few people in the executive branch of government, as I understand it.

MR. BUSH: As I understand, in one of the proposals, the proposal goes to the staff of Congressional people, that they should be subject to penalties if they leak information. So I think you are going to see some action in this whole secrecy thing, and I think it is carefully drawn.

But I must confess, I favor it. I don't understand the concept that people should feel that out of moral outrage or anything else the right to go peddle secret documents, give them away or peddle them. I don't like that concept. If the classification is wrong, let's fix the classification system.

MR. PINCUS: One short thing: The Senate committee that is setting up its own oversight committee has said that they want the right to rest with Congress to declassify material that comes from the President. Is the President going to approve that, or is he going to limit the amount of information he gets?

MR. BUSH: I am not sure of the administration's position on that, Mr. Pincus. I don't know what they are going to do, sir.

MR. MONROE: Did you feel some disappointment, Mr. Bush, when the President ruled you out as a Vice Presidential candidate?

MR. BUSH: No, but I have felt some disappointment—we have sat here for 30 minutes, and nobody talked about the reform of the intelligence community and how I hope this machinery is going to make for better intelligence. We have talked about one other subject.

But no, I didn't feel any disappointment on that. Look, I didn't see any great advantage in this in accepting it—I responded to Mr. Noyes. I don't see any politics. I rule it out. I am a non-politician, as of now.

MR. MONROE: Thank you, Mr. Bush, for being with us today on MEET THE PRESS.

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Produced by Betty Cole Dukert

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1976

GUEST:

GEORGE BUSH, Director,
Central Intelligence Agency

MODERATOR:

Bill Monroe - NBC News

PANEL:

Ford Rowan - NBC
Anthony Lewis - The New York Times
Crosby Noyes - Washington Star
Walter Pincus - Washington Post

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2 THE PRESS with George Bush, Director of the Central Intelli-
3 gence Agency. Mr. Bush has been in his new job at the CIA
4 for three weeks. He was formerly U.S. Ambassador to the
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MR. LEWIS: Mr. Bush, before we go on about intelligence, I am just tempted to ask you a question on a different subject from your experience as head of our liaison mission in Peking. Why did the Chinese invite former President Nixon to go there?

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MR. LEWIS: Well, I have got to come back to this subject on which you may have some personal feelings which you may divulge. In following up Mr. Rowan, you said those things such as the domestic spying had been specifically eliminated in this program. But there are two things about that in the President's program, as I understand it. First of all, there are a lot of exceptions. Certain surveillance is allowed. Corporations may be watched for this purpose or that. Organizations may be infiltrated, all domestically. And the larger question is really what Mr. Rowan was trying to get at, I think: How can you expect people to disclose that kind of wrong, if it does go wrong, if you frighten them not only with this criminal statute but with this oath that you are asking of them, never to tell a secret, a classified intelligence matter?

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I am serving at the pleasure of the President, this President,

the future President, and I am approaching this as a real commitment with no time frame.

When I discussed this job with the President, there has been no thing, I will stay for a certain period of time.

MR. NOYES: Do you feel there have been any serious lapses of direction in the previous management of the CIA?

MR. BUSH: Yes, sir, I think there are some things that are desperately needed to be changed. As soon as the Rockefeller Commission Report came out, the former Director very promptly put out regulations addressing himself to specifics. Many of the things he had done before that and, yes, there were clearly abuses. There were awful abuses, but the problem is though that we have heard, because of the nature of the abuses, we have heard of the abuses; we have heard of some abuses that didn't prove to be abuses and we have not, because of the nature of the business, heard of the successes, so we do have a major problem and yet I have the comforting feeling that the American people support the concept of a strong CIA and a strong intelligence community.

MR. NOYES: Did the responsibility for the abuses reside primarily in the White House or in the direction of the CIA itself?

MR. BUSH: I think there is plenty of blame to go around in lots of different areas, Mr. Noyes.

MR. PANCUS: Mr. Bush, I would like to come at the

question of leaks from a different point of view.

Last fall there were disclosures made to congressional committees about a covert operation by the United States in Angola and your predecessor, Mr. Colby, and the Administration has been very critical that that information was leaked out gradually to the press.

A good deal of that leaking came about because at the very same time that Congress was told we were acting in Angola covertly, Administration officials were saying publicly that no such activity was taking place.

Now, as you look to the problem of leaking, do you see a necessity of the Administration to tell the truth in those areas as a way of preventing leaks which come about because there have been misleading statements made to the public?

MR. BUSH: I think there is a necessity of telling the truth. It is very difficult in something involving covert operations. If they were fully disclosed, they would no longer be covert, so it is very difficult, I think, to have full disclosure.

But certainly the concept of lying to the American people is not a valid one and so I would hope that this problem will be ameliorated now by the more formalized procedure of the new oversight group, by the special operations committee, the formal 40 Committee. I think close cooperation and contact with Congress, which is one of the things that is going to

1 all these investigations will result in an elimination or
2 minimization of the chance for that kind of thing, but I
3 really believe that we ought to avoid the posture of lying
4 publicly.

5 But there will be many times when we cannot be responsive
6 to questions because of the nature of the work that we are
7 involved in.

8 MR. PINCUS: But you recognize there is a difference
9 between being responsive and misleading?

10 MR. BUSH: Yes, sir, I do recognize that, and I hope
11 I can conduct myself in this job with that in mind.

12 MR. PINCUS: Now, following on in Angola, there was
13 additional criticism that the release of the information
14 about Angola led to Congress cutting off aid to Angola, and
15 that, therefore, this was damaging to our national security.

16 The Administration now seems to be moving to a position
17 of recognizing the very faction in Angola that we were at
18 one time trying to undermine covertly. Do you think as a
19 result of those leaks and the congressional action that our
20 national security has been undermined because of Angola?

21 MR. BUSH: I don't know enough about all the details of
22 Angola to say that, but I would come down strongly against
23 the leaks. I think the machinery -- let's look to the future
24 instead of the past. I think the machinery is there to
25 safeguard the interests of the American people through

information to Congress and I do feel that leaking covert operations is very damaging to the United States.

But, whether you could prove in a court of law that any specific case damaged the national security, I don't know. It is clear to me in looking at Angola that Cuba and the Soviet Union at this point has come out ahead. That is clear.

Now, what evolves in Angola from now, or whether we can move in there diplomatically or something and improve the situation, that is for the future to determine.

MR. MONROE: Mr. Bush, in Angola the Administration was engaged in a secret operation which it turned out the Congress opposed and judging by polls the people of the country were strongly opposed to. Wouldn't the U. S. have suffered less psychological damage there if the Administration had been required to go to Congress and seek approval for that covert operation and be told by Congress, "No, don't do it?"

MR. BUSH: I am not sure it would have happened exactly that way. You see, the problem in Angola, Mr. Monroe, is not so much Angola itself, but it is the perception of national will in other areas, important areas, and with other countries, allies, friends and foe alike.

In Angola you can't separate it from the broad perception of our will. But in your specific question I don't know that that would have made a difference or not. I think

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under the new machinery that we can avoid, even though we are not giving prior notice of covert operations, I think through goodwill and communication with the oversight committees, protecting secrecy so it won't leak out if an operation starts, we can safeguard the interests of the American people and I think a lousy operation could be aborted by congressional action. Either through resource control or through their taking it up with the President, which Congress has a wonderful way of doing, and they have a right to do that.

MR. ROWAN: Mr. Bush, there has been a lot of controversy about the publication of the secret report of the House Intelligence Committee, which the House of Representatives voted to keep secret.

I would like to ask you, is there anything, any damage that has resulted from the publication of that report? Can you tell us any specific instance of damage to national security by the people knowing what was in that report?

MR. BUSH: Well, there are certain things in there, but if I told you those specifics, that would highlight those and make things worse. But, yes, there are certain things in there that the intelligence community feels is damaging to the national security. But the fundamental question is, the Congress overwhelmingly voted by almost two to one that that report not be made public, and the report was made public

1 without fulfilling the contract that the Congress had with
2 the President.

3 In my lexicon that is just plain wrong. But that is
4 a matter now for the Congress to determine, not the intelli-
5 gence community.

6 MR. ROWAN: Well, Mr. Bush, I'd like to return to the
7 idea of what kind of damage was done. Certainly the Russians
8 are smart enough to know what is in the report that they would
9 like to find out. The question is of national security. Are
10 you defining national security to be the reputation and
11 prestige of the CIA?

12 MR. BUSH: Well, listen, come to think of it, I could
13 make a case for that being important to national security,
14 but I think there are many more specifics which, if I dwelt
15 on them, would simply show the concern we feel about them
16 and we will pass them along to the proper authorities, but
17 I am not going to do it here or I would be practicing the very
18 thing I am condemning in others.

19 MR. LEWIS: Mr. Bush, you spoke of the issue in Angola
20 as being one of demonstrating the national will. It strikes
21 me as an odd concept we should demonstrate it in secret.

22 Really, the problem that Angola poses, it seems to me,
23 is whether we should undertake a major foreign policy initia-
24 tive going into a whole new area of the world in secret.

25 Don't we usually, haven't we, since 200 years ago, demonstrated
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our national will by doing things in the open? That big a thing?

MR. BUSH: I can't totally argue with your point. I think it is a very, very valid observation and I can't say that, in retrospect, that what you are suggesting about open debate on it would be wrong. What I am saying though is when we undertake something and we represent to others we are undertaking it, they are going to be watching to see if we have the follow-through, if we have the will.

But I think in many instances, frankly I think you will find less use of covert activity. I think there is an awareness now that it is much better to approve things in public. But I will say this, that somewhere in between sending a battalion of Marines into some place and doing nothing, you need to retain a covert capability. To the degree my judgment counts on covert, we are going to be very, very careful in the future. But to the degree some say, should we have covert at all, or not, I say yes, this country must retain a flexible and a strong covert capability.

MR. LEWIS: Mr. Bush, a few moments ago you said we have to rely for controlling abuses not only on law in effect, but on better oversight by the Executive itself, or Congress. Now, the President has proposed something called an oversight board of three distinguished gentlemen. Without being unkind, I want to say they are elderly, that they are part-time, and I just wonder whether you seriously think that such civilians can keep abreast of all the things that may go wrong or that you have just told us a little earlier did go wrong?

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1 MR. BUSH: Let me go back and say I hope I didn't come
2 down saying I don't think you need any law. I hope that
3 this executive order, and then the requests for legislation
4 that have gone forward from the President, say in the field of
5 assassination, I hope that will be passed.

6 Yes, we need law, but certainly you need, inside the
7 executive branch, some machinery. I can't accept in
8 this day of discrimination, age discrimination, because a
9 fellow like Mr. Murphy is a very able person, and I don't
10 think you intended that, but I would say that this machinery,
11 where the inspectors general and the general counsel and in-
12 dividuals are encouraged, without going to the Director, say,
13 someone in the CIA, inspector general, to go direct to the
14 oversight board, is a good kind of machinery to have avail-
15 able. And you couple that with more oversight by the Congress,
16 and we are moving toward responsibility on the part of people
17 like ourselves, the CIA.

18 MR. LEWIS: Mr. Bush, on law, you mentioned the one
19 example where the President has proposed a law to limit covert
20 actions. That is on assassinations. I wonder whether you
21 would favor any other limit. For example, on September 15,
22 1970, President Nixon instructed one of your predecessors to
23 encourage a military coup against the democratic system of
24 another country, Chile.

25 If someone said that to you now, ordered you to do that,

would you do it? How do you feel about that?

I wouldn't do it. say it

MR. BUSH: /I will tell you why I wouldn't^{own} It is because under the President's/order, this double tracking that that became referred to, is eliminated by much more formalized actions of the old 40 Committee, the Special Operations Committee. Nobody can say "Oh, I wasn't there; I got a phone call."

Everybody sits around and makes a decision of this nature. And the assassination thing has been ruled out by law.

And also, Mr. Lewis, you come back in the final analysis to judgment, to integrity, and you can't really define in a code of law everything that is going to guarantee perfection. And I respect the attempt that has been made to try to eliminate abuse, and yet if you say, "Are you guaranteeing there will be no abuse?", I couldn't say it in this field or any other field, by law.

MR. MONROE: We have just about two minutes.

MR. NOYES: Mr. Bush, what do you think the chances are that Congress will enact some kind of legislation that subjects itself to criminal sanctions in the case of divulging such secrets?

MR. BUSH: I think there are two chances: Slim, and none.

MR. NOYES: In that case, how effective do you think these secrets --

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1 MR. BUSH: I am not sure they should, incidentally. I
2 am not sure they should under this speech and debate clause,
3 but those are the two chances I see.

4 MR. NOYES: Well, in the case that we are up against now,
5 the sanctions will be limited to very few people in the
6 executive branch of government, as I understand it.

7 MR. BUSH: Well, as I understand, one of the proposals,
8 the proposal goes to the staff of Congressional people, that
9 they should be subject to penalties if they leak information,
10 and so I think you are going to see some action in this whole
11 secrecy thing, and I think it is carefully drawn.

12 I must confess, I favor it. I don't understand the
13 concept that people should feel out of moral outrage or any-
14 thing else, the right to go peddle secret documents, give them
15 away, or peddle them. I don't like that concept. If the
16 classification is wrong, let's fix the classification system.

17 MR. PINCUS: One short thing: The Senate committee
18 that is setting up its own oversight committee has said
19 that they want the right to rest with Congress to declassify
20 material that comes from the President. Is the President
21 going to approve that, or is he going to limit the amount of
22 information he gets?

23 MR. BUSH: I am not sure of the Administration's position
24 on that, Mr. Pincus. I don't know what they are going to do, sir.

25 MR. MONROE: Did you feel some disappointment, Mr. Bush,
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1 when the President ruled you out as a Vice Presidential
2 candidate?

3 MR. BUSH: No, but I felt some disappointment -- we have
4 sat here for 30 minutes, and nobody talked about the reform of
5 the intelligence community and how I hope this machinery is
6 going to make for better intelligence. We have talked about
7 one other subject.

8 But no, I didn't feel any disappointment on that.
9 Look, I didn't see any great advantage in this in accepting
10 it. I responded to Mr. Noyes, and I don't see any politics.
11 I rule it out. I am a non-politician, as of now.

12 MR. MONROE: Thank you, Mr. Bush, for being with us today
13 on MEET THE PRESS.

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